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ABSTRACT

This article summarizes the reports of five researchers who spoke at a Seminar on Statewide Planning and Coordination for Higher Education. Robert Berdahl, Frank Bowen, Lanier Cox, Lewis Mayhew, and Ernest Palola presented research findings and their implications to representatives from 44 statwide agencies, legislators, other state and federal officials, and college and university administrators. Their major concern was how and for what ends statewide planning and coordination was to be accomplished. The growth and importance of statewide planning offices and of programs for statewide coordination were discussed and the assumptions and weaknesses of various contributing groups - institutional and extra-institutional - were examined. Criteria were set forth by which effective statewide planning could be measured and by which planning models could be designed to improve coordination. These included existence of: (1) a strong independent staff, experience in both academic and state government fields; (2) strong personnel on the board or committee that works with the staff; (3) strong academic advisory committees; and (4) a planning agency with authority to provide for comprehensive and long-range planning, to review programs, approve all new educational programs, eliminate existing programs, and to recommend capital construction priority lists. (AF)

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but prevent "pavnage." The four steps for action are intended to promote trusting relationships in higher education planning.

The model for substantive planning that has been presented provides an important alternative to the current perspectives on planning and policy formulation in higher education.†

In the past, quantitative growth and fiscal formulas have been stressed; in the future, planning will be forced to emphasize qualitative development and flexible governance configurations. Strong educational leadership, increasingly wide participation in planning, and heavy reliance on the special competencies of a wide variety of experts should help achieve innovative solutions to what is the most indisputable challenge to higher education ...nge.

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# PRIORITIES AND PERSPECTIVES

## Planners Discuss Issues at St. Louis Conference

WARREN BRYAN MARTIN

Statewide planners in higher education are not worried that there will be any lack of planning in the 1970s but they are expressing real concerns about the form it will take; its style, quality, and extent. A few years ago there may have been reason to argue that voluntary cooperation was as viable for planning as a legislated coordinative system. Today, however, there is no such thing as no coordination. Structured provision for planning has become prevalent and, in the future, there will surely be increased, legally sanctioned coordination. The open questions are, how will it be done, how well, and toward what ends?

These are the pivotal concerns of five researchers who were featured at a Seminar on Statewide Planning and Coordination for Higher Education held in St. Louis, January 8–9, 1970. Robert Berdahl, Frank Bowen, Lanier Cox, Lewis Mayhew, and Ernest Palola presented their research findings and implications to representatives from 44 statewide agencies. Also in attendance were legislators, other state and federal officials, and administrators from colleges and universities across the nation. The seminar was sponsored jointly by the American Council on Education, the Association of Executive Officers of Statewide Boards of Higher Education, and the Center for Research and Development in Higher Education, University of California, Berkeley.

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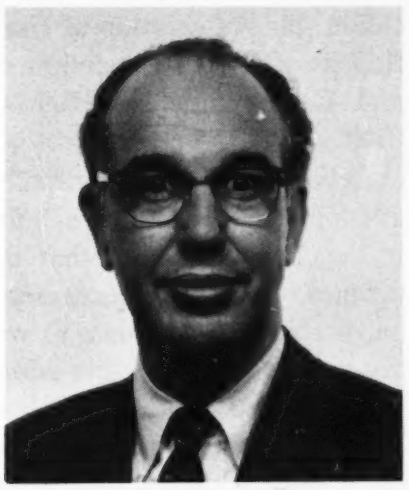
† For more detail on the planning model, see Palola, Lehmann, and Blischke, 1970.

Lewis Mayhew, Stanford University, listed several assumptions which have influenced statewide planning. It has been assumed that enrollments would continue upward, making it necessary to construct new facilities on established campuses as well as establishing new campuses. The cost of higher education would increase, planners assumed, at a rate of about 5 to 10 percent annually. Paying for higher education would consume a large part of a state's budget and statewide planners would be required to allocate limited resources judiciously.

A correlate to this commitment, said Mayhew, was the assumption that state governments would likely become more influential in determining institutional priorities. Although faculty and administrators might want to keep policy formulation within their campus communities, the expectation is that many of the big decisions will be made either through the cooperation of institutional and statewide representatives or increasingly, by legislators and budget analysts in state offices. Hence the need for coordinating councils, staffed by professionals, mediating between the specific needs of educational institutions and the general concerns of society, between the institution's representatives and the public's legislators.

Another assumption has been that there is a definite relationship between a state's economy and general well-being and the presence of a comprehensive system of higher education. Planning agencies were legitimized, therefore, as essential to determining manpower needs as well as creating a truly differentiated system of colleges and universities to service those needs. Voluntary cooperation or ad hoc arrangements to encourage diversity or balance were seen as a failure, given the competitive climate within which both institutions and interest groups operate. Hence the necessity for, indeed the inevitability of, legislated planning or coordinated systems of education.

Because many of the operational assumptions of statewide planning have not been tested by disciplined inquiry, Mayhew emphasized the need for research in these areas. Examples of the types of research needed were given by Lanier Cox, University of Texas, and Frank Bowen, University of California, Berkeley. Cox reported that federal aid to higher education has contributed to the growing awareness of a need for statewide planning and coordination. Furthermore, Cox's respondents (governors, educators, and staff of state agencies) generally agreed that there should be federal support for statewide educational planning. However, public college presidents and private college presidents preferred to have the college or university be the implementing body for federal support programs intended for general institutional development, while state governors and coordinating agencies favored having such funds implemented through appropriate state offices. There was general agreement among all categories of respondents, that federal programs aimed at regional



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and national needs should be operated directly with the colleges and universities involved, while federal programs that would draw colleges and universities into the service of state or local needs should be administered by state agencies. In all other cases of federal aid, federal agencies should deal directly with the institutions.

Frank Bowen reported on academic planning from the particular institutional perspective of the multi-campus university. Working with Eugene Lee, Bowen had studied the governance of the multi-campus university but, for this seminar, he emphasized those findings that illustrated how the planning interests of the multi-campus university were similar to those of a statewide coordinating agency. An assumption of the multi-campus university is that the most important elements of academic planning and program review should be the responsibility of a body separate from those on any one of the institution's several campuses. Distance provides perspective. Separation encourages dispassionate review. Hence, external planning and review functions should be among the prerogatives of a central authority. This office of the university, Bowen indicated, should itself be subject to the review of state authorities, both executive and legislative. However, the multi-campus university properly insists that "as wide a range of educational decisions as possible should be separated from the explicitly political arm of the state."

Autonomy and accountability, especially as affecting the relationship between the educational institution and the statewide planning body, were recurring themes throughout the seminar. Mayhew and Berdahl pointed out that indecision in planning has often been the consequence of ambiguity about the relationship of colleges to the coordinating board. Efforts are made to differentiate between coordination and control, but the line between them is too often indistinct. The researchers saw no easy resolution to the problem. One quoted T. R. McConnell with approval:

> We may expect to see the tension between institutional independence and public accountability grow in intensity. There will be greater stress between the desire to be autonomous and the pressure for coordinated effort. It will take all the statesmanship the academic community together can muster to enable colleges and universities to serve the broader public interest while preserving the identity, the integrity, the initiative, and the morale of individual institutions and, especially, the intellectual freedom of faculty and students.

Another area where weaknesses in statewide planning occur is in the relationship between the public and private sectors of higher education. While it is common for planning or coordinating bodies to acknowledge the needs of both sectors, "the record shows," said Mayhew, "that in practice the fundamental problems of private education, with few exceptions, are left untouched." This has been so because of barriers to coordination created by constitutional stipulations against aid to church-related institutions and reluctance on the part of private college administrators to become involved in statewide master planning. Also some planners have assumed that the private sector is incapable of expanding at the rate necessary to meet the public demand.

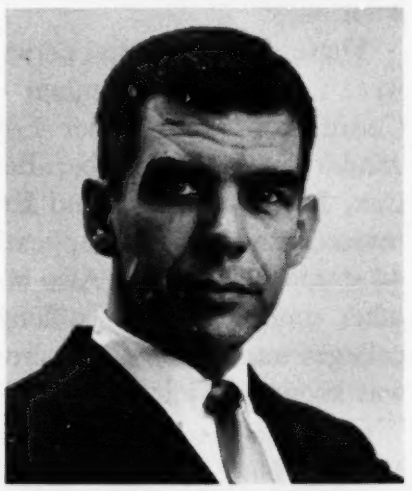
Now, however, according to the research of Robert Berdahl, State University of New York, Buffalo, there are trends pointing to increasing interaction between the planning bodies of the states and private institutions in those states:

> Sophisticated long-range planning will increasingly bring the private sector into consideration; and the deepening financial crisis in many private institutions is driving them to seek one or more of the following types of state aid: scholarships, tuition equalization grants, facilities assistance, state tax credits for gifts . . . per student or per degree state subsidies and, at the most, outright state take-over.

Berdahl's special concern is that careful procedures be set up whereby private and public representation can work effectively together.

Other problems in statewide planning efforts to date include: confusion about the proper role for the community college system—a confusion compounded by lack of research on the role of these colleges in the state and the continuance of certain assumptions about the community and junior colleges, i.e., that once the system is in operation, the productivity of the entire state system will increase; inadequate planning to meet urgencies created by urban problems, especially the educational challenge of minority youth; insufficient involvement of students and faculty in curricular and general institutional planning decisions; and deficiencies in leadership for statewide planning agencies.

Concerning leadership, there was general feeling that the executive director should command salary and status equal to that of the presidents of the senior institutions of a



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state system. However, as Mayhew put it, "one feels that presidents of individual institutions are reluctant to see a vigorous and dynamic person appointed to the coordination role." And there is the possibility that strong, assertive leadership will upset the delicate balance between interest groups that is so essential to effective, representative planning and coordination.

Having given attention to the growth and importance of statewide planing offices and of programs for statewide coordination, and having examined both assumptions and weaknesses of various contributing groups—institutional and extra-institutional—several of the researchers at the St. Louis seminar proceeded to set forth criteria by which effective statewide planning could be measured and by which planning models could be designed to improve coordination. These criteria were drawn from practices that are succeeding in one or more of the coordinated systems.

Effective statewide planning, said Berdahl, requires first, "a strong independent staff, combining experience in both academic and state government fields." Complications here include paying these officers higher than prevailing civil service rates, and persuading colleges and universities that they will be better served working with an able, efficient coordinating staff. The second requirement is strong personnel on the board or committee that works with the primary staff. The public interest must be safeguarded, yet decisions must be made in such a way as to assure institutional autonomy. This takes both good judgment and political skill. One possibility, according to Berdahl, is to seek an arrangement whereby the state governor appoints the planning body from a list of names selected by a panel of educators and public officials.

Strong academic advisory committees are the third requirement for effective statewide planning. This network of committees should range from technical ad hoc bodies, through standing committees on special subjects to, possibly, a council of presidents.

The powers of the statewide planning agency, if it is to be effective, must include: provision for comprehensive and continuous long-range planning for both public and private higher education; program review and approval of all new educational programs in the state as well as the right to recommend the elimination of existing programs; involvement in budgetary formulations for all institutions (to the extent of having sufficiently detailed information about budget proposals, in order to allow for the coordinating agency's detailed review of institutional intentions and recommendations).

Finally, Berdahl recommended that the powers of a strong statewide planning office should allow planners to recommend capital construction priority lists, in keeping with program priorities set by the state's master plan. And, federal programs should be integrated with state programs, with the coordinating agency designated as the state body responsible for distributing and administering federal programs.

Ernest Palola, University of California, Berkeley, joined with Berdahl in emphasizing both prospects and requirements for effecting statewide planning in the 1970s. Palola, however, concluded from his study that, because the main challenges confronting institutions of higher education in this decade are academic reform and educational change, statewide planning must concentrate on substantive issues affecting quality in the teaching and learning process as well as on those change options that show promise of bringing new meaning to the student's educational experience:

> The educational mission and role of institutions requires a complete overhaul, courses and curricula must be revamped, methods of instruction must be reassessed, and new programs, new curricula, and new governance configurations must be designed to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse student population.

Statewide planning that has been essentially quantitative must be changed in emphasis to feature qualitative concerns. Planning that has been means oriented must pay more attention to ends. These are prerequisites if planning and coordination are to meet the "qualitative crisis" in higher education.

The companion article in this issue of *The Research Reporter* is a more detailed presentation of the findings of Palola's study.

The seminar presentations and discussions made clear that statewide planning, now approximately 15 years old, remains in its adolescence. It is still in the period of self-identification. However, a conclusion that was equally obvious was that the decade of the 1970s will require a level of maturity, poise, and sophistication that, fortunately, those who are now leaders in the planning and coordination movement show promise of achieving.

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